



# Hollybrook Infant School

Seagarth Close, Southampton, SO16 6RN

Telephone: 023 8077 1528

**Headteacher: Mrs J Wood, NPQH**

**Deputy Headteacher: Mrs C Clifford**

Dear Parent/Carers,

I really appreciate your positive comments following our recent Ofsted inspections, and your shared pride in the achievements of Hollybrook Infant and Junior Schools. It is important that we now work together on attendance and punctuality.

Links between regular attendance, reaching potential attainment and future life opportunities are well researched. This is why the law is hard on unauthorised absences. It would also be a great shame if our school missed an outstanding Ofsted because of attendance figures, which was an issue raised and heavily scrutinised at both inspections.

### **Governors' support**

I discussed the importance of attendance at full governing body last week. They are supportive and understand the challenge. We talked about the impact even one day's absence can have on a child's learning and confidence.

The Chair of Governors, Nigel Reichelt, asked me to pass on the following comment:

"We are proud to see that a lot of children are achieving between 98-100% attendance. However, we note persistent non-attendance and lateness is growing and share your Headteacher's concerns. Please can we encourage you to familiarise yourself with the attendance policy and support your school by following the school process outlined in the FAQs in this letter."

Parent governor Stephanie Jones added the following: "While I find it tempting to go away outside of school holidays to save money, I understand the impact missing lessons can have on my child's education. I want to work with Hollybrook to give my child the best opportunity to maximise their learning."

### **Lateness**

We have also unfortunately noticed an increase in the amount of pupils being late in the morning. For clarity, I would like to remind you that the classroom doors open at 8.45am and close at 8.50am when learning starts. After this time, your child will need to be signed in through the office using our Inventory signing in system.

Again, as part of our Ofsted inspection, we also had to advise the inspector of how many children have been late so far this year, and of those, who were late on a regular basis, together with the lost time in education.



### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

We know absence does always raise conversations, questions and concern, so we have put together a list of FAQs for you, which hopefully clarifies some of this for you. Please can I invite you to read this, as it also clarifies the law that we as a school are regulated under.

### Your contact for questions

Finally, as you may be aware, since the beginning of this academic year, Catherine Smith who previously dealt with attendance just in the Infant school, has taken overall responsibility for attendance across both the Infant and Junior School. If you have any questions or concerns regarding attendance, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Smith who will be happy to help you. Her contact details are telephone 02380 771528 or

[catherine.smith@hollybrookinfant.co.uk](mailto:catherine.smith@hollybrookinfant.co.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I felt it was important to address these issues so that we can work together in ensuring regular attendance for your child whilst helping them to thrive both academically and socially.

Kind regards



Jane Wood  
Headteacher

*Make Yours: 100% attendance      'be in that number'*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **I'm my child's parent/guardian. Why do you decide what they can do?**

Your child's attendance at school is set by the law. Links between regular attendance, reaching potential attainment and future life opportunities are well researched. By having extra time off due to leave of absence, even those children who find learning easy, have a lot of work to catch up on in class when they return and, in our experience, this can cause a detrimental effect to their learning, and in turn, level of achievement. It isn't just from a learning point of view that children struggle when they have been away from school, it is also the social aspect, and fitting back into their friendship groups with their peers can be difficult.

### **What is the school's attendance policy?**

We have attached this for you. It can also be found fully here:

- Hollybrook Infant: <http://www.hollybrookinfant.co.uk/policies>
- Hollybrook Junior: <http://www.hollybrookjunior.co.uk/policies>

### **What does the law say?**

Legislation set by the Government says: *If a child is of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent/carer is guilty of an offence under s.444 (1) Education Act 1996*

Therefore, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's regular attendance at the school at which they are a registered pupil, of compulsory school age and that absence is not authorised by the school.

As mentioned in our attendance policy, any requests for leave of absence that have not been agreed by the school, but are subsequently taken will put the parents at risk of a Penalty Notice or prosecution. The fine is currently £60 per parent, per child and is payable to the Local Authority. Please be aware the school do not receive any of this money at all and this is therefore not taken into account when requesting penalty notices.

So far, this academic year, in the Infant School, we have requested 9 fixed penalty notices due to unauthorised absences and 12 in the Junior School, totalling 163 days and 187 days respectively.

### **My child is genuinely sick - when should I return them to school?**

We of course understand that children do fall ill and it is sometimes tricky to know when to send them back into school. Please click on the following links which will take you to a guide which will assist you:

<http://www.hollybrookinfant.co.uk/uploads/attendance/should my child go to school 23-01-2019.pdf>

<http://www.hollybrookinfant.co.uk/uploads/attendance/nhs school illness brochure 25-01-2018.pdf>

**I can't afford a holiday in the school holidays. What should I do?**

We appreciate this is a challenge. This academic year we have tried to tag on inset days to holidays and know this has already helped many families save money. Whilst we appreciate the financial challenge, we must stress that your child is legally obliged to be in school. We ask you follow our procedure to request absence before booking any flights outside school holidays.

**My key family members do not live in Southampton. What's the process to request absence relating to family life?**

The school will always be willing to discuss absences relating to family life. Please follow the process set out below.

**How do I request a leave of absence?**

- Parents are required, as before, to complete a leave of absence request form - which is available from the office - for any absence other than illness. Please remember a separate form should be completed for each child
- This must be received by the school no later than 4 weeks in advance of when you intend to take the leave of absence. Please note that you must not book and pay for any travel before you have completed the form available from the office and we have had a conversation.
- If the absence is for a period of more than 3 days, parents will be invited in to school to discuss the leave of absence with Mrs Smith, our Attendance Officer. You may be asked to provide supporting documentation at this time, for example confirmation of flight bookings and/or medical documentation
- If the documentation requested is not provided and/or a discussion has not taken place, the leave of absence will be automatically declined and marked as unauthorised
- A decision will be made based on the information provided and you will be notified in writing

**I struggle getting my child to school on time. Where can I get help?**

Occasional lateness cannot be helped, we totally understand this. However, it should not be on a regular basis. If you experience problems getting your child into school, for whatever reason, please talk to us as this is probably something we can help and support you with. Please either speak to your child's teacher or Mrs Smith who will be happy to help.